

critical digest

305 FIFTH AVENUE, N. Y. 17, N. Y.
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New York Theatre Diary

Tin Waltz- St. Clements Church 423 W 46 -4/21/54. Actors and Writers Theatre present Nat Harris new play produced by Lillja Austrin with Beverly Lunsford, Jan Norvell, Carroll S aint,...Rope-Open Door 55 W 3 4/21/54. William Gass presents revival of Patrick Hamilton Thriller with Jan Merlin, Richard King...Don Juan(in the Russian Manner-Barnard-Milbank Hall-119th St & Bway 4/21/54. Minor Latham Drama Workshop of Barnard College presents premiere of a newly discovered Anton Chekov script.

Current Theatre Reviews- Hits Revisited

Wonderful Town- Winter Garden. Different, but still wonderful. That is the verdict of five NYC daily drama critics who returned to the long run hit musical to see Carol Channing's portrayal in the role originated by Rosalind Russell. With her hair dyed red and with an evident loss of weight, none of the reviewers compared Miss Channing with the dizzy blonde she portrayed in Gentlemen Prefer Blondes. Chapman, News, loved her odd and interesting personality. Critic is convinced after seeing musical many times that Edith Adams is the key actress in the show. Coleman, Mirror, praised Channing's courage, versatility and showmanship. Endlessly entertaining and touching, summed up Hawkins, World Telegram & Sun With its new star the show seems more evenly balanced, notes Sheaffer, Eagle, While Dash, Women's Wear, suggests that Mayor Wagner give the actress the key to the city.

The Girl on the Via Flaminia-48th St.- Two critics have rated the uptown production of the Circle in the Square group and both praised it. Atkinson, Times, rated Alfred Hayes play as one of the most thoughtful and disarming of the season, uptown or downtown. Critic noted that if it had been produced originally uptown it is possible that neither the audience nor the actors would have noticed how good it is. The wisdom and grace might have easily been outdazzled by the glamor. The result now is a relaxed performance that is full of variety and humanity, the Times man summed up. Sheaffer, Eagle, believes play has gained much more than it has lost. But it still provides an evening of absorbing theatre, warm, honest and vital. The play seems tidier, better constructed, though it has lost some of its busy vitality. Betty Miller, he adds, is doing better work uptown. Originally she was a bit too harsh and sullen. Leo Penn reminded the aisle-sitter of a young Spencer Tracy.

Almanac- Imperial- The newer members of the revue's cast, Tony Bavaar and Judy Lynn, aren't shown off to particularly good advantage, reports Jess, Variety. The numbers allotted them are of mediocre quality. Alice Pearce, also new to cast, fares better in two of the show's funnier skits. Production wise the show remains attractive,

Circle in Square Report

Circle in the Square may be a thing of the past, producer Ted Mann told Drama Desk. Unable, because of zoning, to get a theatre license the producers believe it would be unwise economically to operate as a "cabaret."

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 ' Off Broadway '
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William Gass' revival of Rope which was scheduled to open April 13 at Gellendre Studios on 67th St was halted from opening minutes before its debut by the Fire Department. The production which features Jan Merlin will open April 21 at Open Door, 55 W 3 where Refreshments will be available before and after the show.

Anthony Parella's Indoor Sport has moved its opening at the Paramount Hotel's Diamond Horseshoe forward to May 14...Tin Waltz, a new play, opens season for Actors and Writers Theatre at St. Clements Church, 423 W 48 April 21-25, April 30-May 4...Blackfriars' production of Praise of Folly has been extended into May...Envy the Lovers, a satirical comedy by Rex Williams, will be read at People's House Auditorium, 7 East 15, April 21-22...Chamberlain Brown's Heart Attack will be presented week-ends at Sokal Hall, 420 E 71

World of Sholom Aleichem closes at Barbizon Plaza May 9...The Homeward Look, a comedy by Effie Young and Ernest Pagano will be presented at Theatre de Lys starting May 30...Martin Wolfson has replaced Leon Lishner in Three Penny Opera...Trio Productions will present James Joyce Exiles next fall...Rachel Productions will present Sandhog, a musical, in Sept at the Barbizon Plaza.

A Sound of Hunting, at the Cherry Lane, was panned by Down, Variety, for being a weak script which got little assistance from the direction or playing. Rice, Post, on the otherhand found Trio Productions version a good job done by a good troupe...The Boy With A Cart presented Sundays at 5 30 PM at Broadway Tabernacle added several more pro notices to its critical file. Rice, Post, Beaufort, Christian Science Monitor, and Keating, Cue, recommended it. Tickets for entire run through May are exhausted, but some seats may be available to those who apply at church in person at 5 PM each Sunday.

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 Tune WNBC(NYC) Ben Grauer at 7 30 AM day after openings for "CD" quotes reviews.
 Tune WNYC(NYC) Around NYC at Thur 8 AM for "Off Broadway Round-Up" by "CD."
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 ' Theatre Book Notes '
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Pirandello's "Right You Are If You Think You Are" with introduction and notes by Bently, New Republic, published by Columbia Press...Joe Moss writing a book on two-for-one tickets...Random House has published Prescott Proposals.

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 ' Theatre Film Notes '
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Tea and Sympathy film adaption will be made by the author Robert Anderson...Elia Kazan, Hume Cronyn and Tennessee Williams planning a film project for the future...Frederick Brissons plans to present film version of The Pajama Game...Columbia Pictures want to buy rights to Wonderful Town title...Richard II film copy of recent TV program with Maurice Evans is being distributed free to schools which request it. Distribution is handled by Visual Training, 40 E 42nd.

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 ' TV & Radio Theatre Notes '
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"Angel Auditions" with Paula Stone starts April 21 on Du Mont TV 10 30 EST presenting previews of Broadway plays and musicals...Mary Martin will be interviewed on CBS TV Person-to Person-April 30...ANTA Album will be presented on a closed circuit TV set-up to selected theatres across the country on a Thursday in Sept...WNEW(NYC) In Production with Art Ford features interviews with Broadway people.

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AWARD COMMENTS...NY Drama Circle annual meeting brought no surprises or violent happenings of interest. The few special citations suggested were turned down. Watts, Post, and Sheaffer, Eagle, felt that the membership was right in not giving the desired citations to the Phoenix Theatre and to Victor Borge. Dash, Women's Wear, thought the award to The Golden Apple, the first Off Broadway production to be so honored, is another of the many testimonials to the vitality and the growth of the city's tributary theatres this season.

COLUMN TIPS...William Saroyan can't get Hollywood work partly because he refuses to okay income tax deductions, hears Farrell..Milton Shubert will return to NY after Lee Shubert's will is probated and then will present Broadway with some dazzling fireworks, predicts Kilgallen.

"TALENT '54"...Stage Manager Club Talent '54 show at Hellinger was cheered by Morehouse, World Telegram & Sun, and by Rice, Post. Former suggests that the SMC find a theatre for the whole revue and try for a run. Beth highlighted "Ashcan" dance number by Les Pines, "Sixteen Blocks Off Broadway" by Constance Kelly. Rice singled out for special attention Yale Wexler, triple threat young actor from Tea and Sympathy and Tom Poston.

FIRST NIGHT DANGER...If Fire Commissioner Cavanagh really wants to do a show his job and keep in the Broadway limelight, points out Abel, Variety, he should pull in a couple of the dizzy dowagers who insist on smoking at first nights. If he clicks there, Cavanagh will rate an Equity card without bidding so openly for it, comments the trade paper editor.

CRITICAL THOUGHTS...David Brooks would be better than David Atkinson in Girl in Pink Tights, comments NRC Leon Pearson...any critic gave Shirley Booth a bad notice he would be in danger of being punched by his infuriated colleagues, warns Watts, Post...If those second nighters who are trying to break in to the first night lists don't watch out, repeats Variety, they may find themselves demoted to third nighters...Resignation of J J Shubert from the League of NY Theatres will bring about an improved structure of the group, veteran producers told Sylvester, News.

THEATRES PLIGHTS...The theatre when seriously ill calls for drastic medical treatment, even surgery, states Nathan, Journal American. Simply to sit at its bedside, tenderly holding its hand and praying will not help it recover its strength and well-being, critic adds.

Pros & Cons by TMK

The Magic and the Loss seems to be a simple, prolonged, and some-what dull case history of an ad woman who winds up losing everything. Everything, including the set which looks like it was made overnight, is second rate. The top name cast is wasted.

Talent '54 one afternoon stand was so good it was discouraging. An alert producer could do worse than sign up a half dozen of the acts and stage the town's liveliest revue in years.

Two theatre writers have labeled the current campaign by the Fire Dept. a publicity stunt by a new fire executive. Publicity or not, many of the off Broadway theatres and some of the uptown houses too, are fire traps. The energy now being used by theatre folk to condemn the closings as unfair, etc, might better be used to encourage the producers and others that modern theatres should and must be built. A few fire extinguishers in an 1890 house aren't going to save many lives.

Theatres must post a diagram of exact seat locations and must mark all seats which have an obstructed view, License Commissioner Edward T. McCaffrey has announced. The order is effective May 1. The action was taken in response to a series of complaints the department has received over the past six months. The City Center and the Metropolitan Opera have for some time marked tickets to seats with only partial views of the stage. Money is refunded if patrons with those seats request it by the end of the first act.

Plays

The Pajama Game has moved its opening night to May 13 at the St. James...Kind Sir furnishings will be auctioned at Parke Bernet Galleries April 23-24...Pianorama World with Tutti Camarta and his orchestra opens May 13 at the Broadway...Burl Ives and Jo Sullivan will appear in the NY City Light Opera Company production of Show Boat due May 5 at the City Center.

People

Estimated NYC attendance at 31 shows, on and off Broadway, by "CD" this week is 176,000...J J Shubert has resigned from the League of NY Theatres...Theatre Information Bulletin published by Joan Marlowe and Betty White celebrated its 10th anniversary...Attempt by some "second nighters" to have press agents combine first and second night lists flopped...John Golden reported to have signed Betty Crawford and Mark Bond to write songs for Seventh Heaven. Pair were represented at Talent '54..."The Theatre-Its Problems of Survival" is the topic of April 25 dinner-forum of New School Associates. Burgess Meredith, Walter Kerr, Lawrence Langer, Maria Riva are among the speakers.

Award Department

NY Drama Critics Awards voted for Teahouse of August Moon, Ondine and Golden Apple...Show Business 13th Annual Awards to be presented April 21...Actual presentation of the NY Drama Critics Awards will be made on CBS Radio "Stage-Struck" April 25...

Summer Playhouses

St. John Terrell's Lambertville, NJ, Music Circus opens June 4 with Chocolate Soldier...Oakdale Musical Theatre near New Haven to debut this summer...Four week Helen Hayes Festival at Falmouth Playhouse, Cape Code, Mass, opens July 3. She will recreate her roles in "What Every Woman Knows," "The Wisteria Trees", and "Mrs. Mo-Thing"...Pembroke Davenport signed to direct Jones Beach,

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